THE

Mountain Lute,

OR, THE

HAPPY DISCOVERY.

HARTFORD:
Printed by Hale & Hosmer.
1814.

See page 24.

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OR,

THE HAPPY DISCOVERY.

Adorned with Cuts.

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Capital Letters.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W

X Y Z.

Small Letters.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p

q r s t u v w x y z &.

Vowels.

A E I O U Y—a e i o u y.

Points.

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THE

MOUNTAIN LUTE.

HAVING spent a delightful afternoon in rambling over some of the fertile vallies of Brechonshire, in South-Wales, I ascended one of those mountains which have been so frequently noticed by travellers; & at my liesure contemplated the surrounding landscape.—The sun receding from my view behind the opposite hills, tinged the fleecy clouds with gold and purple; the air was so perfectly serene, that scarcely a single leaf was seen to move: and the numerous rills that chased each other down the side of the eminence murmured in unison with the evening song of the sylvan choristers.

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The sons of labour had retired from their respective avocations, & each surrounding object seemed peculiarly adapted to fill the contemplative mind with sentiments of adoration for that Almighty Being, for whose pleasure all things are and were created.

Whilst I was reclining upon the verdant acclivity, and musing on the peculiar beauty of the rural scene, my attention was suddenly roused by the harmonious music of a lute, accompanied by a voice of uncommon sweetness. This circumstance appeared so strange in such a sequestered spot, that I could scarcely believe my senses; but on changing my posture, and listening more attentively, I found that I had not been deceived. I therefore walked hastily to the opposite side of the mountain, whence the music seemed to proceed, and soon discovered a youthful peasant playing on a lute, near the entrance of a little cottage that seemed almost embosomed in a young plantation of trees. A beautiful young woman was looking at the musician with indescribable affec-

tion, and singing with exquisite taste; while a groupe of old men and women were seated on a mossy bank in attitudes of profound attention; and several children were employed in weaving an elegant wreath of flowers.

I stopped at a distance that I might not interrupt the pleasures of this happy circle; but when the charming air was finished, and the young woman had received the flowery chaplet from her juvenile auditors, I stepped forward, and inquired if I could be accommodated with a bed at any neighbouring inn?--The peasants immediately flocked around me, and observed there was no inn within four miles, but the young musician added, that if I could submit to lie in a little cabin, he would do his best to entertain me.

If at first I was surprised at his capital execution on the lute, I was much more astonished at the politeness of his manners, and the easy fluency with which he spoke. I accepted the invitation with rapture, but earnestly requested him

to indulge me with a repetition of the melodious air which had attracted my footsteps towards his habitation.

He readily acceded to my request, and pressing the hand of the young woman, whom I found to be his sister, he told her to accompany him as before.--The company resumed their attitudes of attention, and after a prelude which seemed to thrill thro' every nerve, we were entertained with a song on the subject of rural felicity; while a tear stood trembling in the eye of every one present, and I enjoyed the most exquisite pleasure in witnessing the effects of the beauties of nature upon an illiterate and unpolished society of people —After a pause of a few moments the company separated, wishing me a good night with the

utmost cordiality; and the young musician conducted me to the little cottage, where I experienced a most hearty welcome.

After partaking of some brown bread, excellent fresh butter, and new milk, I begged to be made acquainted with the adventures of a man whose appearance and manners had excited the most favourable sentiments in his favour; and

he promised to gratify my curiosity.—We accordingly removed to a little bench just without the door, and Griffith, (for such was the name of my entertainer,) related the following particulars:—

"I was born, sir, in this cottage about two-and-twenty years ago, and my infancy passed under the watchful eye of an indulgent and affectionate mother; but when I had attained my sixth year, this beloved parent was taken from me; and in about two years afterwards, my father was compelled, by the unfortunate issue of a lawsuit, to sell his cottage, and to retire to the house of a friend whom he had formerly assisted. This sad reverse of fortune preyed so incessantly upon his spirits that he soon sunk into an untimely grave; and thus I and my sister were left

poor unprotected orphans, solely dependent on the bounty of Providence.

"The good old man who had purchased the cottage was peculiarly struck with our helpless situation, and humanely proposed that I should tend his sheep, while my

sister might render herself useful in the domestic concerns. We thanked him with tears of unfeigned gratitude, and immediately embraced his generous offer; but notwithstanding all his kindness, the loss of my dear parents, the thought of being a mere hireling in the cottage which ought to have descended to me, and the lonely life that I led upon the mountain, overwhelmed me with melancholy; and my poor eyes were often red with weeping, whilst my lambkins were bounding sportively by my side, and the face of creation was literally dressed in smiles.

"One evening while I was tending my fleecy charge, and offering up a little song of praise to my Creator, a stranger approached me, and inquired the distance from the public road.——On my replying

that it was several miles, he pointed to my master's cottage, and asked whether my parents could not supply him with a bed for the night? I told him that my dear parents were dead, and that I and my sister were at present in servitude; but that my master would most probably accommodate him. Accordingly I led him to the cottage, and had the satisfaction to find that he was entertained with the utmost kindness and hospitality.

"Next morning I was informed that my master's son would attend the sheep, as the stranger had proposed taking me with him, and had expressed a strong desire of serving me.—I was truly grateful for the stranger's kindness, but my heart was sensibly grieved at the thought of quitting the dear place of my nativity, and my still dearer

sister. After a few moments, however, I armed myself with some degree of fortitude, and left my beloved Jenny, with a solemn assurance, that my prayers should be continually offered up for her happiness and preservation.

" My new protector was a man of about forty years of age, of a remarkably quick understanding, and most fascinating manners; but the loss of a beloved wife had thrown a shade of melancholy over his features, and his complexion was remarkably pale. His profession was that of a musician, and his execution on the lute, his favourite instrument, was such as might have secured him some important advantages; but he seldom visited the busy scenes of life, having a little competency from his father, and being passionately fond of rural retirement.

" When I first accepted the offer of his patronage, he instructed me in reading and writing; and soon afterwards undertook to teach me the lute, on which I soon made a very tolerable proficiency. He also furnished me with some admirable selections from the works of our greatest poets; and, in short, it may be justly said, that he exerted himself with unremitting assiduity, for the space of five years to cultivate my heart, my taste, and my understanding, without expecting any other reward than the self-approval of conscious virtue, & the blessing of that God who is emphatically styled 'the Father of the fatherless.'

" In the midst of all my acquirements, amusements, and occupations, I never forgot my natal cottage, nor my beloved sister; but

frequently spoke of them to my patron, who always consoled me with the cheering hope, that some providential turn might yet take place in my favour.

" One morning, in the month of May, this generous man desired me to follow him, and after a very long walk, he brought me to the

mountain where I had first met with him. He then sat down upon the grass, and addressed me in the following manner:—

"My dear Griffith, I have long observed the sorrow which oppresses you whenever you think upon yonder little cottage which was unfortunately tore from your industrious father; but I now propose the means of your obtaining possession of it again, and consequently of fixing your sister in a more agreeable situation.—

"My heart seemed to bound within my breast at this discourse. I pressed his hand to my lips, and bedewed it with tears, whilst he added,

"I have fulfilled the duty which I conceive Providence to have imposed upon me, by giving you a decent education; and I now present you with my lute, with which I desire you will travel in the cha-

racter of an itinerant musician, and I am confident that by care and frugality, you may soon amass a sufficient sum of money to enable you to return, and purchase your father's cottage."—He then pressed me, with the most affectionate tenderness, to his bosom, and, putting two guineas into my hand, bade me adieu with visible emotion.

"It would occupy too much time were I to relate all the particulars of my journey. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that in the space of four years, I travelled on foot through the greatest part of Wales and England, and met with a success still greater than had been expected by my kind patron. In every town and village I was cordially received, and even in the most opulent cities my execution on this lute introduced me to the very best company. In some places I had advantageous offers held out to me, to settle amongst the inhabitants, but these were always counterbalanced by the recollection of my dear sister, and the idea of once more claiming my parents' cottage as my own.

"After I had completed the fourth year of my travels, I examined the state of my

purse, and imagined myself rich enough to re-visit my native country. I therefore set out with the most eager impatience, and proceeded as rapidly as possible, in the fond hope of seeing my dear benefactor, of throwing myself at his feet, and of expressing those grateful acknowledgments which had long existed within my bosom. But, alas! my revered patron had been

dead upwards of three months, and I found it impossible to realize the picture of supreme happiness, which had been drawn by my glowing imagination. I went, however, to pour out my sorrows on his grave, and to offer up my devout thanks to the Almighty for the assistance he had granted in my time of greatest need.

"On the same evening, I arrived at this hamlet, where I found that my person was forgotten, but my lute, as usual, procured me admission into the cottages, and I had the pleasure of being invited to my father's cottage, without any one recognizing my features. My sister was grown much taller since I left her, and I observed with secret satisfaction that my old master treated her rather as his child, than in the character of a dependant.—She was busily employed at her spinning wheel when I went in, but she seemed struck with my appearance, as if recollecting some resemblance to her unfortunate brother. I played several airs on my lute, and after some time ventured to play and sing my favourite song of rural felicity."

"Will you have the goodness," said I, interrupting him, "to oblige me with a recital of that song?"

He bowed compliance, and immediately played a cheerful air upon his lute, to which himself and his amiable sister sang the following words :—

Sequester'd from noise, in the humble retreat,
Where shepherds recline on the ground,
The children of virtue felicity greet,
And paradise blossoms around.

No scenes of contention, no terrible news
The heart's constant pleasures remove,
But zephyrs ambrosial their odours diffuse,
While music enlivens the grove.

Around their kind master the wandering flock
Wind carelessly over the hill ;
Or follow the kids to the cliffs of the rock,
And drink from the murmuring rill.

Whilst blest in each other, their owners enjoy
Each comfort that nature bestows ;
In praise to their Maker the day they employ,
And thankfully sink to repose.

Griffith and Jenny sung these lines with

such expressive sweetness as revived in my mind the old fable of Apollo, and I almost fancied that I heard the strains of that celestial performer in the vales of Thessaly; but whilst I desired to express my feelings, I found my emotions too great to admit of utterance. Griffith, therefore, embraced that opportunity of resuming his narration.

"My sister," said he, "was evidently affected whilst I was singing, and the worthy owner of the cottage highly applauded my skill, but on being pressed to sit down to supper a more affecting scene ensued; for Jenny caught a glimpse of the mole which you may observe on my chin, and immediately sprang into my arms, exclaiming, "It is, it is my beloved brother!" (see the Frontispiece).—An explanation now took place, and on my relating the success of my travels, my old master readily consented to sell me the cottage, on condition that I would let him reside with me. This I agreed to, and he in return, kindly instructed me in the art of husbandry, and rendered me several other important services.

"The news of my return was soon

spread through our little hamlet, and all the peasantry congratulated me on my singular good fortune, which they justly considered as the result of my youthful integrity, and my unshaken confidence in the care of an all-righteous Providence; and from that time to the present, I have made it a constant rule to indulge my honest neighbours with the nocturnal diversion which first induced you to visit this retired spot. The good old gentleman who succeeded my father is now very infirm, but Jenny and myself exert ourselves as much as possible for his assistance and amusement, and he regards us as his darling children. My beloved Jenny is now completely happy; and for my own part, as I am once more possessed of my little patrimony, my utmost ambition is to tread in the footsteps of a father, who was respected by the rich, and beloved by the poor, as a truly pious and honest man."

Having thanked Griffith for his artless narration, my attention was almost insensibly fixed on his person; and it is but justice to say that the animation of his fine countenance, the fluency of his conversation, and the unfeigned gratitude

which he expressed towards his worthy deceased patron, formed a most striking contrast with his rustic dress, and humble situation; and almost induced me to consider him as a being superior to the ordinary race of men. His sister was equally interesting, and agreeable in her manners, and might have appeared to advantage in the most brilliant circles; but I remarked the truth of the poet's beautiful assertion, that

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

In one particular, however, these couplets did not apply to the amiable Jenny, as her native goodness of heart diffused blessings around the humble sphere in which she moved, and the music of her voice was at all times sufficiently captivating to render the little hamlet a scene of perpetual hilarity.

After I had for some time enjoyed the refreshing breeze, and contemplated the azure expanse of heaven brilliantly illumi-

nated by countless stars, I withdrew to a littel chamber, the furniture of which was peculiarly clean and neat, and although the bed was not very soft, I enjoyed a sleep more tranquil and refreshing than was, perhaps, ever experienced by the votary of sloth and luxury.

Next morning I was awakened by the harmonious warbling of a sky-lark, and found by the warmth of the sun that I had slept beyond my usual hour. I therefore hastened to join my kind host, whom I found at his little breakfast table, with his sister and his old master.—When I entered, the old gentleman was saying grace with the most unfeigned devotion, and the happy countenances of his companions fully illustrated the truth of the assertion, that all the ways of religion are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

After partaking of their rural repast, I accompanied the young musician to a neighbouring field, where the reapers were employed in cutting the yellow bearded corn, and binding it up in sheaves, while several indigent women and children followed in the capacity of gleaners, and the valley resounded with songs of joy and merriment.

Among the interesting groupe, I particularly noticed a young lad about twelve years of age, who seemed eminently distinguished by his cheerfulness and activity; and whose manners appeared more polished than those of his companions.—I begged my kind host to inform me of his name and parentage, observing that I felt a peculiar interest in his fortune, and that I had some faint recollection of his features.

The musician of the mountain seemed rather surprised at the eagerness with which I made this request. However, he promised to gratify my curiosity, and leading me to a seat beneath the branches of a spreading oak, he recited the following particulars:—

"Shortly after I had returned to my native village, and taken possession of my father's cottage, a gang of gipsies came into the neighbourhood, and committed several little depredations; in consequence of which the villagers united to expel them from this part of the country. Our threats and determined manner had the desired effect, and they retired one night with precipitation; but in the morn-

ing as I was going to my usual labour, I discovered this poor boy (whose name is William) lying asleep under a bank. I awakened him, and asked to whom he belonged? and added that the gipsies had been gone for several hours.—The lad looked fearfully around, as if doubtful of of their departure; but on finding they were really gone, he threw himself at my feet, and earnestly begged that I would give him some employment, to prevent him from again falling into the hands of those wicked people.—He then told me that he had been stolen from his parents when he was about five years old, and that he passed a most unhappy life in the society of those wretches, who had frequently beaten and almost starved him, because he would not assist in their dishonest method of obtaining a subsistence.—The boy's artless tale and streaming tears made so deep an impression on my heart, that I immediately gave him employment, & placed him with an old widow whose tenderness and care reflect the highest honour upon her humanity. He is now, as you see, the most cheerful member of our little community, and

whilst I reflect on the goodness of my patron who rendered me such important services, I feel an unspeakable pleasure in being able to afford some little assistance to this boy, who, without some friendly interposition, might have perished with want, or have been decoyed into some of those base practices which he has hitherto beheld with horror and detestation."

Delighted as I had been with my host's music and hospitality, I was still more truly charmed with his humane and charitable disposition; but what were my sensations when on questioning the youth himself, I recognized in this poor outcast, the dear, the long-lost child of my own sister!—I clasped him to my bosom with unutterable ecstacy, and satisfied, as well as I was able, the curiosity of the villagers, who now crowded around us.—— "My dear friends," said I, "this poor boy was born to affluence, and nurtured in the most tender manner; but having unfortunately rambled into the fields, about seven years ago, without permission, he was lost, and his mother has been the victim of sorrow and dejection ever

since. The mystery which enveloped his fate is now happily elucidated, and I shall have the supreme pleasure of restoring him to the arms of his affectionate parent."

A general surprise pervaded the whole assembly; every eye glistened with the tear of sensibility, every heart throbbed with pleasure, and I immediately set out with my dear nephew, whose emotions may be much better conceived than expressed.

It only remains to add, that I was commissioned to remunerate the Welch musician for his goodness, and on his refusing to accept of any recompence, I distributed my sister's bounty among the more indigent villagers, while every voice united in ardent thanksgiving to that DIVINE BEING who had first induced me to turn aside, to listen to the sweet souads of the MOUNTAIN LUTE.

FINIS

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

A MONKEY.

A DOG.